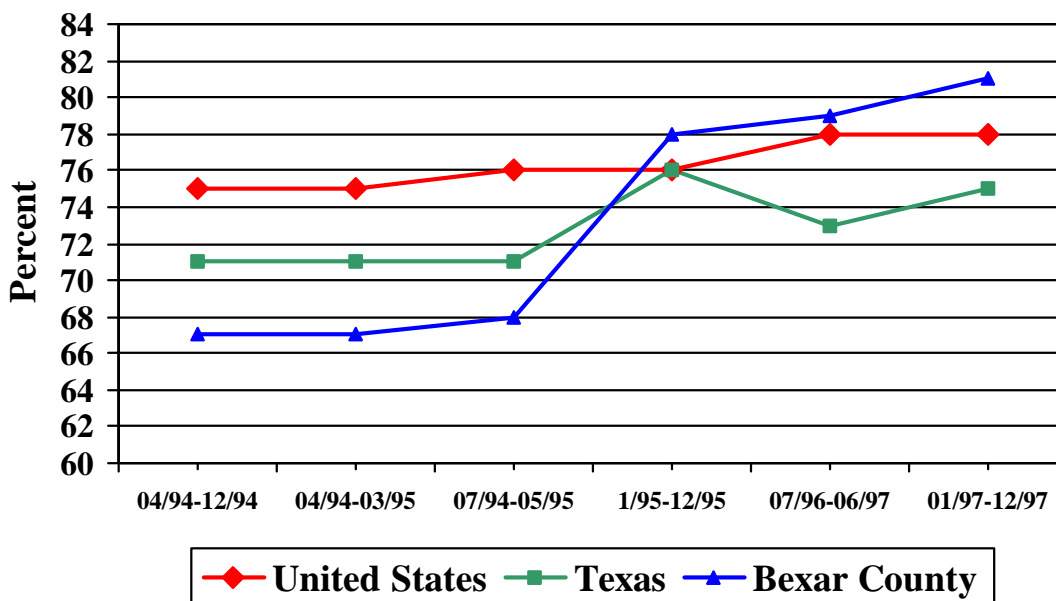


Immunization Registry Progress in San Antonio/Bexar County

Note: Unless otherwise stated, the information in this fact sheet was obtained from data and information submitted by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District Immunization Program Manager or representative from the Texas Department of Health Immunization Program. June 1999.

Immunization Coverage in Bexar County:

According to National Immunization Survey (NIS) data for July 1997 to June 1998, the percentage of children 19-35 months of age who were up-to-date with 4 doses of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, 3 doses of poliomyelitis, and 1 dose of measles, mumps, rubella vaccine (4:3:1) was 80%. The following graph shows the percentage of children 19-35 months of age who were 4:3:1 up-to-date in the United States, Texas, and Bexar County from April 1994 to December 1997. It should be noted that the expansion of the registry in Bexar County to include private providers took place in 1994-1995.



Facts about the San Antonio Immunization Registry System (SAIRS):

- SAIRS collects and manages immunization data for Bexar County, Texas.
- SAIRS collects information on all immunizations, regardless of age.
- Immunization registries, which are integrated with other information systems are more efficient and sustainable, because records can be consolidated and redundant information only needs to be entered once. Currently, entities which link with the registry include:
 - Vital Statistics
 - Newborn Screening Program
 - Medicaid Management Information System
 - Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program
 - Schools and Daycare Facilities
 - Community/Migrant Health Centers

- Military Health Systems
- Managed Care Organizations
- Nursing and Immunization Clinics
- Public Health Facilities
- Other Registries
- As of April 1999:
 - At least 99% of children less than 6-years old were enrolled in the registry.
 - 100% of all public providers in Bexar County were enrolled in the registry.
 - 50% of private providers in Bexar County were enrolled in the registry.

Other registry plans, accomplishments, and successes:

- SAIRS has been widely accepted in the public and private sector during the 20 years since its development.
- The registry provides reminders to providers and parents when a child's immunization is due or has been missed.
- SAIRS has a mapping feature which identifies areas in the community where immunization needs are greatest. This feature allows the San Antonio Metro Health District (SAMHD) to target clinic and outreach services to those areas of the county that have the most pressing need.
- Outreach nurses have the ability to log into the SAIRS system from remote locations using laptop computers.
- SAIRS provides assistance for adolescent and adult immunization efforts as well as for childhood immunizations.

Some challenges and barriers affecting registry progress:

Texas has very specific legislation (HB3054) that requires all physicians to report immunizations to the registry and for the data to be captured from insurance company billing systems. Restrictions that have developed as rules have been drafted for this legislation, which severely limit the state system, and threaten the working relationships that SAIRS and SAMHD have developed over the years in Bexar County. Further developing system ties with managed care organizations has become difficult, because of the uncertainty that exists regarding what information will and will not be available to all parties involved.

Current political or legislative factors affecting registry activity:

SAIRS is currently watching the state legislature to see how the turmoil hindering Texas' statewide immunization registry, Imm Trac, will affect local programs. During this legislative session, two bills were introduced regarding the registry. Both have been withdrawn with the understanding that the Texas Department of Health will bring major stakeholders together to discuss the registry. The Texas Medical Association has suggested a study of Imm Trac in cooperation with the Texas Department of Health before the next legislative session in 2001. The Texas Medical Association supports the registry, but would like to implement a better way for physicians, the Texas Department of Health, insurance companies and other providers to interface with, report to, and access the registry information.

Current registry funding:

Maintenance costs for SAIRS are currently divided between the City of San Antonio and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In response to recent budget cuts at both the federal and state levels, SAIRS has revisited its workflow process. Automation and system upgrades have allowed the SAMHD to reduce the budget for SAIRS by over 34% from 1998 levels. This allows for funds to be redirected for use in other program areas. However, further reductions in the operating budget would be detrimental to the project's ability to analyze and utilize SAIRS, and would threaten its ability to support those functions on which the community has come to depend.

Helpful immunization and immunization registry contacts in San Antonio:**Registry Contact Person:**

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Other Resources:

- Texas Department of Health, Immunization Division – Robert Crider, Director
- Dallas Area Infant Immunization Coalition
- Shots Across Texas-Panhandle Coalition
- San Antonio Metro Immunization Registry – Mark Ritter
- Texas Children's Hospital for Harris County Immunization Registry – Dr. Celine Hanson
- Texas Medical Association – Gayle Harris

San Antonio Metropolitan Health District Page:

<http://www.ci.sat.tx.us/health/>

SAIRS website

<http://www.ci.sat.tx.us/health/immunizations/index.htm>

Additional Information:

SAIRS and Imm Trac have developed methods of sharing information between the systems, but these efforts have been put on hold while legislation and rule making for Imm Trac are taking place.